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ACTION ARA-15

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INFO OCT-01 IO-14 ADS-00 EUR-12 HA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5284
INFO USMISSION GENEVA
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ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)
U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS
Margaret P. Grafeld, Director
(☒) Release () Excise () Deny

Exemption(s): _____
Declassify: () In Part (☒) In Full
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Date _____ Declassify on _____ Reason _____

[REDACTED] BUENOS AIRES 3831

ROME FOR VATICAN OFFICE

E.O. 12065: GDS 5/7/86 (FRIEDMAN, TOWNSEND B.) OR-P
TAGS: SHUM AR
SUBJECT: [REDACTED] BALBIN TURNS HIS BACK ON DISAPPEARED

1. (U) OVER THE PAST SEVERAL WEEKS RICARDO BALBIN, LEADER OF THE RADICAL PARTY, HAS ON THREE OCCASIONS PUBLICLY ADDRESSED THE ISSUE OF THE ARGENTINE DISAPPEARED. ON EACH HE HAS DELIVERED THE SAME HARSH MESSAGE: "THEY ARE NOT MISSING, THEY ARE DEAD." THIS MESSAGE HAS BEEN ACCOMPANIED WITH RECOMMENDATIONS BY BALBIN THAT THE FAMILIES OF THE DISAPPEARED CEASE LOOKING FOR THE LOVED ONES AND BEGIN TO ACCEPT WHAT "EVERY ARGENTINE KNOWS," THAT THEY ARE NOT COMING HOME. BALBIN STATED TOO THAT THE "MISSING PERSONS CASE IS CLOSED" AND HIS CONCERN TODAY IS "ALLEVIATING THE PAIN AND PREVENTING ANOTHER GENERATION FROM SUFFERING." IN OTHER WORDS, THE COUNTRY SHOULD CONCERN ITSELF WITH THE FUTURE AND NOT RAKE OVER THE PAST.

2. (U) THE MOTHERS OF THE DISAPPEARED, AMONG OTHERS, PUBLICLY CHALLENGED BALBIN. THEY CALLED UPON HIM TO
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

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REVEAL THE SOURCE OF HIS INFORMATION IF HE KNOWS FOR A FACT THAT THEY ARE DEAD. THEY ALSO STATED THAT IF

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BALBIN REALLY BELIEVES THAT THE DISAPPEARED ARE DEAD THEN HE SHOULD SAY THAT THEY WERE "ASSASSINATED" BY THE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT SINCE THE DISAPPEARED WERE TAKEN BY THE SECURITY FORCES. IN THE FACE OF THIS CHALLENGE, BALBIN HAS REFUSED TO RETREAT ON HIS BASIC ASSERTION OF THE FATE OF THE DISAPPEARED AND THE NEED TO PUT THIS EXPERIENCE BEHIND THE COUNTRY.

3. [REDACTED] COMMENT: BALBIN IS THE LEADING DEMOCRATIC CENTRIST POLITICIAN IN ARGENTINA. HIS REMARKS ARE DESIGNED CHIEFLY TO CALM AND REASSURE THE MILITARY THAT IT HAS NOTHING TO FEAR FROM A FUTURE RADICAL GOVERNMENT--THE RADICALS WILL CONDUCT NO NUREMBERG, BALBIN IS SAYING. IN DOING SO BALBIN IS REFLECTING, AS WELL, THE VIEW OF MANY OTHER NON-MILITARY ARGENTINES WHO FEEL THAT UNLESS THE PAST IS FORGOTTEN THE COUNTRY WILL BE CONDEMNED TO RELIVE IT.

4. [REDACTED] BALBIN'S TREATMENT OF THE ISSUE, TOO, REFLECTS THIS AMBITIOUS POLITICIAN'S CONCLUSION ON HOW CONCERNED MOST OF THE ARGENTINE PUBLIC IS WITH THE GROSS HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS OF THE GOA. THOUGH HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS NOURISH THE HOPE THAT THE ARGENTINE PUBLIC WILL EVENTUALLY BE AROUSED ON THE ISSUE, BALBIN, LIKE MOST OF THE PRACTICING POLITICIANS STILL AROUND, HAS MADE QUITE ANOTHER JUDGMENT: HE CANNOT BE HURT WITH THE PUBLIC BY SEEKING TO BURY THE ISSUE, EVEN IF DOING SO PUTS HIM ON A COLLISION COURSE WITH THE MONTHS AND OTHER HUMAN RIGHTS GROUPS.
CASTRO

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